Proposal for Media Council

3733. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD :
SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH :

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal to set up Media Council to replace the existing Press Council to cover both print and electronic media ;

(b) if so, the details thereof ;

(c) whether some eminent journalists in their leading articles in national dailies have recently criticised the role of Chairman and some members of Press Council and expressed that objectives for which the Council had been established have not been achieved thereby ; and

(d) if so, whether Government propose to plug the loopholes, if any, to make it more acceptable to all sections of the media ?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

(c) and (d) Certain articles have appeared in the national dailies on the subject. As a policy, the Government does not interfere in the functioning of the Press Council of India.

Harassment of Consumers by Pay Channels

3734. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware that consumers are suffering due to Pay Channels like Star, ESPN, ZEE TV as they are increasing their tariffs continuously ;

(b) whether there is any control of Government on such companies;

(c) whether Government are taking any steps to check such increase and stop harassment of the consumers ; and

(d) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ) : (a) Government has received representation from various quarters regarding increase in subscription charges by various Pay Channels.

(b) Government does not regulate the charges levied by Private Channels.

(c) and (d) The existence of a large number of competing channels itself ensures protection of viewer interests, which is further reinforced by the existence of laws such as Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 and Consumer Protection Act, in addition to the MRTP Act.

CBI inquiry against the officers of DD

†3735. SHRI KAPIL SIBAL :

SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH LALAN :

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that CBI is conducting inquiry against a number of officers working in the Doordarshan ;

(b) the names of officers against whom CBI is conducting inquiry alongwith their posts and charges levelled against each of them ; and

(c) the number of officers out of them still working in Doordarshan ?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Assets of Prasar Bharati

†3736. SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH LALAN :

SHRI RAM JETHMALANI :

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that total assets of Prasar Bharati are worth Rs. 35,000 crores and 40,000 employees are working therein ;

(b) if not, the facts in this regard ; and

(c) the total annual revenue earned by the Prasar Bharati during the years 1999-2000 and 2000-2001?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ) : (a) and (b) The actual progressive capital outlay on the assets of Prasar Bharati since inception, as determined by Principal Accounts Office, as on 31-3-97, is Rs. 3245 crores. The total number of employees working in Prasar Bharati is about 41,349.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.